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The Political Religion of a Nation

LET EVERY AMERICAN, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and NEVER TO TOLERATE their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and Laws let every American pledge his life, his property and his sacred honor. Let every man remember that to violate the Law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. LET REVERENCE FOR THE LAWS be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling books and almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in the legislative halls and enforced in courts of justice. In short, let it become the POLITICAL RELIGION of the nation.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

An address delivered in Westminster Abbey, July 28, 1920, at the unveiling of Saint-Gaudens's statue of Abraham Lincoln, gift of America to the British people.

By authority of his Majesty's Government, a statue of an American has been set up in the Canning Enclosure, where on one side Westminster Abbey and on another the Houses of Parliament look down upon it, where it is surrounded by memorials of British statesmen whose lives are inseparable parts of the history of the kingdom and of the empire, and where the living tides of London will ebb and flow about it. The statue is the work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, son of a French father, native of Ireland and greatest of American sculptors. The American commemorated is Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States. In behalf of the American donors I now formally present the statue to the British people.

Abraham Lincoln was born on Feb. 12, 111 years ago, in a log cabin among the mountains of the State of Kentucky. He came into a frontier life of comparative poverty, labor, hardship, and rude adventure. He had little instruction and few books. He had no friends among the great and powerful of his time. An equal among equals in the crude simplicity of scattered communities on the common level by force of his own qualities. He was sent by his neighbors to the State Legislature, where he learned the rudiments of government. He was sent to the Congress at Washington, where he broadened his conceptions to national scope. He was admitted to the Bar, and won a high place as a successful and distinguished advocate. He became convinced of the wickedness of African slavery, that baleful institution which the defective humanity of our fathers permitted to be established in the American colonies. He declared his conviction that slavery was eternally wrong with power and insistence that compelled public attention. He gave voice to the awakened conscience of the North. He led in struggle for freedom against slavery. Upon that issue he was elected President. In that cause, as President, he conducted a great war of four years' duration, in which millions of armed men were engaged. When in his wise judgment the time was ripe for it, then upon his own responsibility, in the exercise of his authority as commander-in-chief, invoking the support of his country, the considerate judgment of mankind, and the blessing of God upon his act, he set free the 3,000,000 slaves by his official proclamation, and dedicated the soil of America forever as the home of a united liberty-loving commonwealth. The act was accepted; it was effective; African slavery was ended; the war won—for union and for freedom; and in the very hour of victory the great emancipator fell at the hand of a crazed fanatic.

It was not chance or favorable circumstance that achieved Lincoln's success. The struggle was long and desperate, and often appeared hopeless. He won through the possession of the noblest qualities of manhood. He was simple, honest, sincere and unselfish. He had high courage for action and fortitude in adversity. Never for an instant did the thought of personal advantage compete with the interests of the public



Saint-Gauden's Lincoln.

cause. He never faltered in the positive and unequivocal declaration of the wrong of slavery, but his sympathy with all his fellow-men was so genuine, his knowledge of human nature was so just, that he was able to lead his countrymen without dogmatism or imputation of assumed superiority. He carried the civil war to its successful conclusion with inflexible determination; but the many evidences of his kindness of heart toward the people of the South and of his compassion for distress and suffering were the despair of many of his subordinates, and the effect of his humanity and considerate spirit upon the conduct of the war became one of the chief reasons why, when the war was over, North and South were able during the same generation to join again in friendship as citizens of a restored Union.

It would be difficult to conceive of a sharper contrast in all the incidental and immaterial things of life than ex-

isted between Lincoln and the statesmen whose statues stand in Parliament Square. He never set foot on British soil. His life was lived and his work was wholly done in a far distant land. He differed in manners and in habits of thought and speech. He never seemed to touch the life of Britain. Yet the contrast but emphasizes the significance of the statue standing where it does. Put aside superficial difference, accidental and unimportant, and Abraham Lincoln appears in the simple greatness of his life, his character and his service to mankind, a representative of the deep and underlying qualities of his race—the qualities that great emergencies reveal, unchangingly the same in every continent; the qualities to which Britain owed her life in the terrible years of the last decade; the qualities that have made both Britain and America great. He was of English blood, and he has brought enduring honor to the name. Every child of English sires should learn the story and think with pride, "Of such stuff as this are we English made." He was of English speech. The English Bible and English Shakespeare, studied in the intervals of toil and by the flare of the log fire in the frontier cabin, were the bases of his education; and from them he gained, through greatness of heart and fine intelligence, the power of expression to give his Gettysburg address and his second inaugural a place among the masterpieces of English prose.

He was imbued with the conceptions of justice and liberty that the people of Britain had been working out in struggle and sacrifice since before Magna Charta—the conceptions for which Chatham and Burke and Franklin and Washington stood together, a century and a half ago, when the battle for British liberty was fought and won for Britain as well as for America on the other side of the Atlantic. These conceptions of justice and liberty have been the formative power that has brought all America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to order its life according to the course of the common law, to assert its popular sovereignty through representative government—Britain's great gift to the political science of the world—and to establish the relation of individual citizenship to the State, on the basis of inalienable rights which Governments are established to secure. It is the identity of these fundamental conceptions in both countries which makes it impossible that in any great world emergency Britain and America can be on opposing sides. These conceptions of justice and liberty are the breath of life for both. While they prevail both nations will endure; if they perish both nations will die. These were Lincoln's inheritance, and when he declared that slavery was eternally wrong, and gave his life to end it, he was responding to impulses born in him from a long line in America, who were themselves a product of the age-long struggles for the development of Anglo-Saxon freedom.

The true heart of Britain understood him while he lived. We remember the
(Continued on page 30.)

CALIFORNIA CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE

FRANCIS M. LARKIN, EDITOR

SAN FRANCISCO, FEBRUARY 3, 1921

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

Lincoln the Man.

WITH the passing of the years it is amazing how the American people deepen their love and reverence for Abraham Lincoln. He was associated with a critical period of our national existence yet we are increasingly regarding him as a man apart from that struggle. We think less of Lincoln the statesman, or Lincoln the administrator, or Lincoln the orator, but more of Lincoln the man. We identify the best things of our American life with him. The truest and the best things of our democracy link themselves with the spirit of Lincoln.

It is interesting to note, also, the regard with which he is held by the English speaking people around the world. It has frequently been stated that in England Lincoln is regarded as the greatest man of our English speech since the days of Cromwell. It is not without significance that the greatest of the recent biographies of Lincoln has been written by a member of the English nobility. Now that we have the perspective of nearly threescore years since Lincoln's death we can understand the better that he comes down to us as democracy's Cromwell. When we want to find the language

that will give a fitting expression to the aspiration of our democracy we take down the speeches of Lincoln from the library shelf. Now that the spirit of democracy is making itself felt in a larger way in the world's life one can readily understand how Lincoln symbolizes to the peoples of the newer nations the enlarging conception of freedom.

But Lincoln stands, further, as a symbol of opportunity. We smile at the old phrase which is unfailingly repeated to every American boy. "You may become President of the United States some day." But let us thank God that it is possible for us to say it and may we be spared from that day when we can no longer repeat it to our children. The achievement of Lincoln, that enabled him to rise out of an early environment that had anything but promise in it, is a heritage of stimulus to each new generation.

But it is the character of Lincoln that is the most valuable legacy. This is the dominant thing that has endured. The most cherished achievement in the life of "the first American" is his character which it is the privilege of his country to never forget.

The Editor's Mail.

Religion and its Explanation.

ON another page will be found a communication under the title "The Bible and its Interpretation." The author has kindly consented to its publication at my request. It is a clear statement of some of the many difficulties in thinking about the Bible and religion. It can well be used as an introduction to this series of articles upon Religion and its Explanation.

A clear distinction must be drawn between the fundamentals of the Christian religion and the doctrinal statements of those fundamentals. It is one thing to believe in the free moral agency of men, the forgiveness of sins and the possibility of moral recovery, human perfectability, God and immortality; and it is quite another thing to give a scientific statement or explanation of those fundamentals. This is done in what is termed systematic theology.

It is one thing to believe in the beneficent effects of the sun upon life. It is another thing to explain those effects and their causes in the scientific terms of biology. We may believe in the sunshine and the rain and have beautiful gardens and have no theory of the biological causes or processes.

It was at this point that Wesley was strong. He sought to produce a revival of pure religion by bringing men into a filial relation with our Heavenly Father. He was determined to escape any doctrinal controversy upon the scientific explanation of man's relation to God. He declined to allow the controversies growing out of a scholastic age to divert him from the fundamentals to a scientific description of them.

In his sermon on the Trinity, Vol. 2, page 20, he says: "Whatsoever a generality of people may think, it is

certain that opinion is not religion; no, not right opinion; assent to one or to ten thousand truths. There is a wide difference between them; even right opinion is as distant from religion as the East is from the West. Persons may be quite right in their opinions and have no religion at all and on the other hand persons may be truly religious and hold many wrong opinions * * * " and again, "hence we cannot but infer that there are ten thousand mistakes which may consist with real religion with regard to which every candid, considerate man will think and let think." These words he applies to the text "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one."

In another place he writes upon the subject of faith and opinion in a more general manner. This mental attitude will be found in all his writings. The following quotation is from Wesley's work Vol. 5, page 175-1856.

"I will not quarrel with you about opinions. Only see that your heart is right towards God; that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more.

I am sick of opinions; I am weary to hear them. Give me a solid, substantial religion; give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good fruits, a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love.

Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are and whatsoever opinions they are of. Whosoever thus doeth the will of my Father in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister."

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CITIZENS OF HEAVEN IN MEXICO.

(Continued from page 15.)

er-center leaders and a pianist and Benjamin's home is crowded now every week with folks who come the first time to see and hear the curious thing, but remain and come again to discuss the curious thing and in many cases to go out and put it into worthwhile living. There is music there of a rather unusual sort too. Benjamin's mother and aunt stayed once to hear and see what there was to be heard and seen, and now, whenever their stage engagements will permit, they stay and furnish the music. It's a serial story And no installment is going to appear marked, "To be concluded in our next"—or, worst of all, "Finis"!

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

(Continued from page 3.)

Lancashire workmen brought into poverty and suffering through lack of cotton. When the Emancipation Proclamation had dispelled all doubt as to the real nature of the struggle in America, 6,000 of them met in a great hall in Manchester and sent to President Lincoln a message of sympathy and support. This was his answer:

"Under these circumstances I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country. It is, indeed, an energetic and re-inspiring assurance of the inherent power of truth, and the ultimate and universal triumph of justice, humanity and freedom. I do not doubt that the sentiments you have expressed will be sustained by your great nation; and, on the other hand, I have no hesitation in assuring you that they will excite admiration, esteem and the most reciprocal feelings of friendship among the American people. I hail this interchange of sentiment, therefore, as an augury that, whatever else may happen, whatever misfortune may befall your courtesy which now exist between the two nations will be, as it shall be my desire to make them perpetual."

We may disregard all the little prejudices and quarrels that result from casual friction and pinpricks and from outside misrepresentations and detraction and rest upon Lincoln's unerring judgment of his countrymen and his race. We may be assured from him that, whenever trials come, whenever there is need for assurance of the inherent power of truth and the triumph of justice, humanity and freedom, then peace and friendship between Britain and America will prove to be, as Lincoln desired to make them, perpetual. This man, full of sorrows, spoke not merely for the occasions and incidents of his own day. He expressed the deepest and holiest feelings of his race for all time. Listen to the words of his second inaugural:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash

shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said: 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

Consider this letter which he wrote to Mrs. Bixby of Boston:

"I have been shown on the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming; but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our

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Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

More than half a century has passed, but is this the voice of a stranger to the men and women of Britain in these later years? Because, under the direst tests of national character, in the valley of the shadow of death, the souls of both Britain and America prove themselves of kin to the soul of Abraham Lincoln, friendship between us is safe; and the statue of Lincoln the American stands as of right before the old Abbey where sleep the great of Britain's history.

LINCOLN—EXEMPLAR OF AMERICAN IDEALS.

As we contemplate the life and influence of the Savior of our Country, the anniversary of whose birth a grateful nation observes on the twelfth of February, we render thanks to our Heavenly Father for having given to us, in His own good providence, the immortal Abraham Lincoln.

His was a life of struggle against poverty, social position, and lack of educational advantages. But despite, all these obstacles, so often thought to be insurmountable, he rose from the ranks of the lowly, overcame the prejudice, pride, and jealousy of others who enjoyed many privileges denied to him, and educated himself in the sciences of engineering, law and statesmanship.

Mastering the English language, becoming learned in the art of statecraft and interpreting correctly the letter and the spirit of our Constitution, he gave to the world his first and second inaugural addresses, his Gettysburg address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the undying principle that the Union of the States is indissoluble.

Counted a failure in his earlier years, when he tried his hand at first one thing and then another, that he might earn an honest living, he became the most notable success in the history of our Republic.

Born in the backwoods of Kentucky, reared in the wilderness of Indiana, trained on the frontier of Illinois, he entered the White House as a living example of one man's rise to prominence and power in this "Land of the Free."

Peer of the immortal Washington, exemplar of American ideals, liberator of four million slaves, preserver of the Union, and martyr to the cause of freedom and righteousness, this noblest product of our soil,—though not in the flesh, but living in the spirit,—has become the American ideal, a world character, "a man for the ages."

May his life, character and influence inspire and strengthen our youth, that they may ever uphold the truths which he established.

—F. Ray Risdon.

Los Angeles, 1920.

THE AFTER DINNER SPEAKER.

A banqueter tells this rather good story on himself. He was making a speech at a dinner and in the course of his remarks he said:

"America has produced three great men—Washington, Lincoln and I myself—" At this point a burst of laughter drowned the rest of his remarks. He had intended to say "think Theodore Roosevelt," and he sat down without saying anything more."—Boston Transcript.

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